

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JIDDA 07270 300642Z

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2761

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY SANA

S E C R E T JIDDA 7270

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, SA, UK, YE

SUBJECT: UK INTEREST IN YAR ARMS PROGRAM

REF: A. STATE 25183

B. JIDDA 7188

1. FROM OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH THE BRITISH EMBASSY HERE ON THE SUBJECT OF ARMS SALES TO THE YAR IT APPEARS THAT A GOOD PART OF THE PRESSURE THE BRITISH ARE FEELING TO DO SOMETHING IS SELF-GENERATED. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCES, NO ONE ASKED THE BRITISH SPECIFICALLY TO DO A SURVEY BUT AT ONE POINT THE SAUDI SIDE (PROBABLY PRINCE SULTAN) SUGGESTED THAT THE YARG MIGHT LIKE TO HAVE THE BRITISH DO A SURVEY OF THEIR ARMED FORCES. AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME, PERHAPS IN RESPONSE TO A BRITISH ENQUIRY, THE YEMENIS ALLOWED AS HOW THE SAUDIS MIGHT LIKE TO HAVE THE BRITISH DO A SURVEY. NEITHER SIDE SPECIFICALLY ASKED THE BRITISH TO CONDUCT THE SURVEY.

2. IT ALSO APPEARS THAT FOR SOME TIME THE UKG AND SAG HAVE BEEN IN VERY GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT SOMETHING MUST BE DONE TO ASSIST THE YAR TO MODERNIZE ITS ARMED FORCES. NO ONE, SO FAR AS WE KNOW, HAS SPELLED OUT TO THE BRITISH,

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SECRET

PAGE 02 JIDDA 07270 300642Z

HOWEVER, JUST WHAT THEY CAN DO. WE THINK IT ENTIRELY

POSSIBLE THAT IN TERMS OF OVERALL SAUDI-UK RELATIONS AND UK REGIONAL POLICY THE BRITISH ARE EAGER TO BE RESPONSIVE TO SAUDI INITIATIVES IN THIS FIELD. THE BRITISH MAY THEREFORE HAVE FOCUSED THEIR ATTENTION ON THE IDEA OF A SURVEY SINCE IT WAS THE ONLY SPECIFIC POINT THE SAUDIS HAD DISCUSSED WITH THEM.

3. FROM OUR LATEST CONVERSATIONS WITH THE BRITISH EMBASSY ON THIS SUBJECT (POL COUNSELLOR MILES OCT 28, PLEASE PROTECT.) IT APPEARS THAT THE PRESSURE IS SOMEWHAT OFF. SO FAR AS THE EMBASSY HERE IS AWARE THE SUBJECT CAME UP ONLY IN THE MOST GENERAL FASHION IF AT ALL DURING THE FAHD VISIT. WE INFORMED MILES OF THE OUTCOME OF THE AMBASSADOR'S LATEST MEETING WITH SULTAN IN WHICH THE LATTER INDICATED THAT YAR CHIEF OF STAFF DHASHMI WOULD BE ARRIVING IN RIYADH ABOUT NOV 7 AND THAT THE SAG WAS PREPARED AT THAT TIME TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO US PROPOSALS MADE TO DATE AND TO COUNTER WITH BROADER PROPOSALS FOR ASSISTANCE TO THE YAR ARMED FORCES (REF B, BEING REPEATED SEPTEL TO LONDON). MILES WAS PLEASED THAT SULTAN SEEMED FINALLY READY TO MOVE. HE OPINED THAT THE VISIT OF FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAHAN IN LATE NOVEMBER MIGHT PROVIDE A CONVENIENT OPPORTUNITY FOR THE BRITISH TO RAISE THIS ISSUE AND ASK JUST MMMMMWHAT THE BRITISH ROLE MIGHT BE. IN ANY CASE HE SAW NO NEED FOR A BRITISH APPROACH TO THE SAUDIS BEFORE THE GHASHMI VISIT IF IT TAKES PLACE AS NOW SCHEDULED.

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